

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSE-00 FS-01 ABF-01 L-03 EB-07 AID-05

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R 251130Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2942

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 1997

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EAID, CE

SUBJ: PL-480 RUPEES ISSUE

REF: COLOMBO 1940; COLOMBO 1835

1. ON JUNE 24, AMB RAISED WITH W.T. JAYASINGHE, SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MDFA), REAPPEARANCE THAT DAY OF ARTICLE CRITICAL OF PL-480 ASSISTANCE ON EDITORIAL PAGE OF GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED CEYLON DAILY NEWS. ARTICLE HAD FIRST APPEARED ABOUT SIX WEEKS AGO IN HOUSE ORGAN OF PEOPLE'S BANK, CHAIRMAN OF WHICH IS LEADING MEMBER OF FINANCE MINISTER'S PARTY, TROTSKYITE LSSP. IT CONTAINS MANY DISTORTIONS AND INACCURACIES REGARDING PL-480 ASSISTANCE AND USE OF FUNDS GENERATED FROM IT. AMB TOLD JAYASINGHE HE WAS SURPRISED THAT STORY HAD BEEN REVIVED AT THIS TIME AND GIVEN PROMINENT PLAY IN GOVT-CONTROLLED NEWSPAPER. HE SAID HE WAS PARTICULARLY SURPRISED IN

CONTEXT OF PRIME MINISTER'S JUNE 3 STATEMENT IN PARLIAMENT AND AMB'S UNDERSTANDING THAT

GSL WISHED TO PLAY DOWN PL-480 ISSUE.

2. EDITORIAL NEXT TO PL-480 ARTICLE CONCERNED
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REPORT THAT BRITISH WERE SWITCHING TO GRANT AID

AND VOICED CRITICISM OF AID WITH STRINGS ATTACHED WHICH WAS CLEARLY AIMED AT US ALTHOUGH WE WERE NOT SPECIFICALLY NAMED. THIS WAS THIRD RECENT EDITORIAL IN DAILY NEWS WITH ANTI-AMERICAN OVERTONES. OTHERS WERE EDITORIAL JUNE 20 REGARDING MRS GANDHI (COLOMBO 1965) AND JUNE 21 EDITORIAL REGARDING CIA ACTIVITIES. AMB CALLED EDITORIALS TO JAYASINGHE'S ATTENTION, NOTING GOVT-CONTROLLED NEWSPAPER HAD CARRIED THREE EDITORIALS IN FIVE DAYS WHICH HAD DEFINITE ANTI-AMERICAN SLANT.

3. JAYASINGHE SAID HE HAD TAKEN CAREFUL NOTE OF AMB'S COMMENTS AND CONCERN AND WOULD TAKE MATTER UP WITH HIGHER AUTHORITIES, PRESUMABLY WITH PRIME MINISTER FOR WHOM HE HAS BEEN SPENDING GREAT DEAL OF TIME PREPARING REPORT ON PL-480 CONTROVERSY. JAYASINGHE ALSO MENTIONED THAT GSL DOES NOT MAINTAIN DIRECT AND CONTINUING SURVEILLANCE OVER DAILY NEWS EDITORIALS.
VAN HOLLEN

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NNN

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